

INSTITUTE OF MECHANICAL ENGINEERS.

—A general meeting of the members of this Institute was held on Wednesday in last week at Birmingham. Mr. J. E. McConnell, in the absence of the president, took the chair; and, after the minutes of the previous meeting had been confirmed, Mr. Marshall read the first paper for discussion, "On Improvements in the Construction of Railway Waggon," by Mr. Henry H. Heason, of London. A paper, by Mr. Siemens, of Birmingham, "On a new Regenerative Condenser for high and low pressure Steam-engines," was next read, and it was followed by a paper by Mr. Archibald Shaw, of Dudley, "On a new Blowing Engine working at high velocities."

BOILER EXPLOSION AT HEY, NEAR OLDHAM.—We are far from recording every one of those ever-recurring mischances. We only occasionally allude to them by way of repeated protest against the avoidable continuance of what we deplore. Three lives have just been lost at Hey, near Oldham, by the bursting of a steam boiler attached to the mill of Messrs. Rhodes and Co. of that place. The boiler was almost new.

THE WORM IN THE BOBBIN.—In your number of the 2nd instant, Mr. James Jardine inquires for a preventive to the existence of "the worm in the bobbin." I believe if the bobbin be macerated in a solution of corrosive sublimate, the object may be attained. The salt combining with the albumen of the wood, the nutriment of the insect would be destroyed; and it would not inhabit its substance, as the wood does not penetrate timbers so prepared and placed as piles in the sea. The experiment will cost little more than the trouble of making it.—AN INHABITANT OF MAY-FAIR.

A "SELF" INTELLED STREET CARRIAGE.—The *Courier du Havre* states, that a vehicle, 6 feet long and 3 wide, was lately seen to circulate through the streets of the town, moved by concealed mechanism. The inventor of the vehicle, M. Prevost, of Lisieux, declares that he travels usually by it three leagues an hour without fatigue on ordinary roads, and that he can easily go over from twenty-five to thirty leagues a day on it. The moving power in this case is not the muscles of the legs or arms, but simply the weight of the person seated.

THE PEOPLE'S CARRIAGE.—We lately noticed an omnibus, equal to its name, which has begun to run between Glasgow and Paisley with fifty-six passengers—first, second, and third class. With a handy vehicle of this calibre, combined with the penny system at Liverpool, to enjoy the advantages of which it appears there is now a complete scramble, we would have something like a people's carriage for suburban traffic, whereby the pent-up working-classes of this great metropolis might daily have a mouthful of fresh air in the country for twopence. As for the town traffic, with less lumbering carriages, the experiment at Liverpool is certain, as the local Times remarks, to lead to the extension of the cheap system.

THE BARRACKS' AFFRAY AT RUSHOLME.—A reward of 100*l.* has been offered by Government to any person who will give such information and evidence as shall lead to the discovery and conviction of those who discharged guns, and destroyed property, during the recent attack upon men who were protecting the brick-croft of Mr. Farr, at Rusholme. It is announced that the Secretary of State will advise the grant of her Majesty's pardon to any accomplice who shall give such evidence as to lead to the same result.

THE NEW CHURCH AT VICTORIA-ROAD, KENSINGTON, has been consecrated. It is dedicated to the Saviour, and will be used as a chapel of ease to the parish church. It is in the early English style of architecture, and is built of Keaton rag-stone: cost, 5,000*l.*, raised by voluntary contributions. It has a tower and spire at east end of aisle. Room has been allowed for a peal of bells, which will be shortly introduced into the tower. The interior has a very plain appearance, the decorations being in the time of the fourteenth century. There are no galleries, and the pews are low and open. The church is capable of holding eight hundred persons, and a portion of the sittings will be free.

LONDON WITH A 'CLEAN' FACE.—I think it will be admitted without a single dissentient, that to look well or to advantage both houses and public buildings should have a clean exterior. It is the same with the genus homo. Contrast a dirty with a clean person: the one excites disgust, the other is viewed with pleasure. And what city, may I ask, has more dirty-looking buildings than London? It is painful to see its noble buildings begrimed with soot and dirt. How soon do all its structures fall victims to this nuisance! And where is their beauty then? gone: and instead of the clean and fresh material which so pleased the beholder, a metamorphosis has taken place, and soot and smoke with ruthless sway claim them as their own. However delicate the ornamentation, however exquisite the sculptured exterior, they not only become spoiled, but hideously black. Witness, amongst a thousand instances, Henry the Eighth's Chapel, or St. Paul's. The houses of the metropolis would soon become as black but for the aid of paint, and painting a stone building is almost akin to daubing a statue with pigment. Is there a remedy for this? It has occurred to me that glass would be a cure. I throw out the idea for him who thinks it worth anything, that glass might be used to face buildings with, instead of stone. I do not mean translucent or crystal glass, but glass ground, of requisite thickness and strength. Such a material would not absorb the dirt and smoke constantly floating on the air, but every shower of rain would wash them off, and buildings would look as fresh and new as ever. And as glass, from recent improvements, can be moulded to any shape almost as perfectly as if cut, the most exquisite Gothic and other ornaments might be produced. L.

A MILITARY "PIRE-WHEEL."—Mr. Wm. Delany, of Jerpoint, in this county, a miller in humble circumstances, has invented a most original piece of ordnance, consisting of six barrels disposed in the form of a wheel, which revolve upon an axle, and are loaded, primed, levelled at an object, and discharged alternately without the lapse of a moment between, so that the fire upon any point may be perpetually kept up without the slightest loss of time. The model is beautifully contrived and put together, and the machinery is perhaps as ingenious in its conception as we have ever seen.—*Kilkenny Moderator.*

BLASTING GOLDEN ROCK.—Quartzmining, according to a correspondent of the *Hartford (U.S.) Courant*, is beginning to attract a good deal of attention at San Francisco. "News," he says, has been brought to this city, by express, of one of the most astounding discoveries that California has disclosed to the world. Two men in two days blasted out of the solid rock three hundred and fifty-five thousand dollars (80,000*l.*) worth of gold! One of the owners here, who owned three-sevenths of the vein, was living on the charity of friends when the express arrived, informing him that there were 153,000 dollars subject to his order, on Carson's Creek, near the Tuolumne. His name is Morgan." May it not be Walker?

OPENING OF VICTORIA-STREET, WESTMINSTER.—On Wednesday last, the new street, leading from Westminster Abbey to the Vauxhall-road, was officially opened by the Commissioners of the Westminster Improvements. Among those present were the Earl of Carlisle and Sir E. Pease.

CHEMICAL RE-SHARPENING OF OLD FILES AND RASPS.—It is stated by a writer in *The Chemist* that by the following cheap and simple process old files and rasps may be made nearly equal to new ones. First boil them in soap lye, or a mixture of slacked lime and soda in water: this done, wash them in water, and directly throw them into a tub full of dilute sulphuric acid, formed of one part acid and six parts water: let them remain here for some time; the exact period being easily found by taking out a file and observing whether the marks appear sharp or not: as soon as the desired sharpening is effected, the files must be taken out and washed in another tub containing a solution of soda, about an ounce of soda to a pail of water.

"STRIKE AT OLDHAM."—On Monday week the mechanics, to the number of upwards of 600, in the employ of Messrs. Hibbert and Platt, turned out, owing to the masters contracting to let work to a man named Michael, contrary to the rules of the Mechanics' Society. They held a numerous meeting in the Hall of Science, but appear to have either thought better of it, or to have carried their point, as they resumed work on Wednesday morning.

IRISH MALACHITE.—We have been shown some beautiful specimens of Irish Malachite, from the copper mines, county of Cork. Large pieces of this were broken up, in complete ignorance of their value, by labourers. We do not know what quantity may be still attainable, but the pieces we saw were of as fine a quality, as we should imagine, as if they came from the mines of Demidoff.—*Mirror of the Times.*

[ADVERTISEMENT.]
THE LOCK CONTROVERSY.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE BUILDER."
SIR,—In the *Illustrated News* of to-day it is stated that Mr. Hobbs "formally accepted" the challenge we gave him at the meeting of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers. This statement is wholly incorrect, as Mr. Hobbs declined the offer to attempt to pick two of our ordinary commercial locks then produced, as decidedly as he refused the former challenge made by us in the Times.

In reference to the alleged lock-picking at an empty house in Great George-street, it may be as well to inform the public that Mr. Hobbs had access to the lock for a fortnight previous to his public attempt, and that the door was opened for his convenience during the whole time he was operating. It will be remembered that the first lock said to have been picked was in his possession previously for seven days.

Mr. Hobbs talks about fair "commercial" locks. The lowest price he asks for each lock similar to that he shows at the Exhibition is 50*l.*—by no means too much for such a complicated piece of workmanship. Our locks of the same size are sold at 50*s.* each.

We beg further to state that we shall not be bound by any set attempts made by amateur or professional lock-pickers on locks out of our own possession. The undeniable protection they have afforded for more than thirty years from thieves and burglars is the best evidence in their favour.

We are, Sir, your obedient servants,
CHUBB and SON.

57, St. Paul's Church-yard, Aug. 7, 1851.

TENDERS

For the erection of St James's National Schools, Shoreditch:—Mr. James Tibbitt, Architect. Quantities furnished:—

T. and W. Piper	£1,335 0 0
W. Lorraine and Sons	1,323 0 0
B. Carter	1,297 0 0
Haynes and Co.	1,465 0 0
W. Brass and Son	1,404 0 0
R. Ashby and Sons	1,403 0 0
B. Grimdall	1,434 0 0
R. and E. Curtis (accepted)	1,373 0 0

For the New Penitentiary, Durham:—Mr. John Howison, architect:—

Mason and Bricklayers' Work.	
Spink and Hindmarsh	£292 0 0
Forster	916 0 0
Gainford	904 0 0
Wister	846 0 0
Pembroke (accepted)	773 0 0
Carpenter, Joiner, Glazier, and Smith's Works.	
Robson	£471 10 0
Moore	471 0 0
Forster and Goadon	375 0 0
Marin	350 0 0
Thompson (accepted)	343 11 0

Plaster's Work.

Proston (accepted)	£27 0 0
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Plumber's Work.

Beddies	£46 0 0
Heron	54 16 0
Almond (accepted)	74 10 0

Master's Work.

Tindal	£20 0 0
Dickens	20 0 0
Coxon	75 6 6
Pearson	84 0 0

Painter's Work.

Wake and Company	£25 0 0
Hamington	14 10 0
Hedgcock (accepted)	11 8 6

For Works at Homerton College, Middlesex, for the Congregational Board of Education, consisting of New College and School Buildings, and sundry alterations (exclusive of fittings): Messrs. Smith and Thorneley, Architects:—

Smith and Appleford	£4,163 0 0
Cabitt and Co.	4,120 0 0
Locke and Nathan	4,083 0 0
T. and W. Piper	3,987 0 0
H. and R. Holland	3,934 0 0